

# PRELIMINARY

## ARIZONA

Arizona ranks 39th among all states, with 638 active local governments as of June 2002.

### COUNTY GOVERNMENTS (15)

There are no areas in Arizona lacking county government. The county governing body is called the board of supervisors. Greenlee County reported the smallest county population in 2000 (8,547 people). Maricopa County reported the largest county population in 2000 (3,072,149 people).

### SUBCOUNTY GENERAL PURPOSE GOVERNMENTS (87)

#### Municipal Governments (87)

Municipal governments in Arizona are locally designated as cities and towns. When comparing municipal jurisdictions within the State of Arizona, US Census 2000 population characteristics indicated that the town governments of Jerome and Winkelman represented the smallest populations (each represented less than 500) within the state, and the City of Phoenix (1,321,045 people) represented the largest population. There are no significant differences in legal powers or status between city and town governments that would affect their classification for census purposes. Cities and towns are incorporated by petition of at least two-thirds of qualified electors in a community, with a population of fifteen hundred or more. After popular vote, if a majority of qualified electors vote for the incorporation of a municipality, the community can be incorporated as a city or a town.

#### Township Governments (0)

Arizona has no township governments.

### PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS (245)

#### School District Governments (231)

The following types of school districts in Arizona are counted as independent governments for census purposes:

- Common school districts
- Community college districts
- Joint common school districts
- Joint technological education districts
- Joint unified school districts
- Provisional community college districts
- Unified school districts
- Union high school districts

All school district types are governed by an elected board. Most of these districts share similar finance powers such as the ability to levy ad valorem taxes (with voter approval) and issue bonds. The only exception to this observation is provisional community college districts. State code does place some restrictions on the fiscal activities of provisional community college districts. According to state code, when comparing provisional community college districts to community college districts, we find that provisional community colleges may not receive equalization payments in the form of state aid. Such districts can convert to community college districts, in which case all assets and liabilities are transferred to the new district. Presently, the State of Arizona is expected to repeal the provisional community college program on 1 July 2009.

Only one provisional community college district to date has been organized - Santa Cruz County Provisional Community College District (Nogales).

#### Dependent Public School Systems (14)

The following dependent public school systems are authorized under Arizona statutes:

Systems dependent on county governments (14):

- County accommodation schools
- County special education cooperatives

County accommodation schools, which provide education on military reservations or in territories that are not included within the boundary of a school district, fall directly under the supervision of the county superintendent of schools. They are not counted as separate governments. In June 2002, 8 Arizona counties operated such schools.

County special education cooperatives, providing special education programs for exceptional children, are formed by agreement between two or more school districts. They are either administered by one of the participating school districts, or by the county superintendent of schools. They are not counted as separate governments. In 2002, 3 of these cooperatives were reported in operation.

#### SPECIAL DISTRICT GOVERNMENTS (305)

Arizona statutes authorize for the creation of a variety of special districts that are counted as independent governments for census purposes.

### **Active Management Area Water Districts**

Active management area water districts are created to represent territory located in at least 3 counties. Districts are organized by adoption (public hearing) of a resolution approving the district's formation. Prior to adopting the resolution, a majority of voters from participating government jurisdictions will occur in the following manner: a majority of counties to include the most populous county within the active management area, the largest city (population) within the active management area, and an irrigation district of more than 1,000 acres in the active management area that levies district assessments. Active management water districts are created for the purpose of supplementing the water supply of active management areas through indirect groundwater storage and recovery projects. These districts are governed by a board of at least 7 members. After lists of nominees are submitted by local government, the initial board is appointed by the governor. These water districts have the power to collect fees and issue revenue bonds.

### **Agricultural Improvement Districts**

The purpose of agricultural improvement districts is to irrigate, drain, secure and store water, and generate electricity for for the district. These districts are created by the county board of supervisors, upon petition of 5 or more land owners, followed by public hearing and voter referendum. An elected board of directors governs each district. Agricultural improvement districts may fix charges, levy ad valorem taxes, and issue general obligation bonds upon voter approval. The only district of this type reported in operation as of June 2002 was the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District.

The Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District was established in 1937. It holds title to the Salt River Project properties, which are operated by the Salt River Valley Water Users' Association. Organized in 1903, the association is a private corporation that operates the Federally-constructed Salt River Project. The Salt River Valley Water Users' Association continues to operate the irrigation and drainage system of the district under contract, and operates the power plant facilities used to store and transfer electrical power.

### **Community Park Maintenance Districts (Encompassing an Area of 160 Acres or More)**

These districts are created to maintain community parks that exist in contiguous territories, and are located in more than one county. They are established by petition to the county board of supervisors, followed by a public hearing. An elected board of directors, which includes at least 3 individuals, governs each district. Community park maintenance

districts may fix fees, rentals, and charges. They may levy property taxes, and borrow money. No districts of this type were reported in operation as of June 2002.

Park maintenance Districts having fewer than 160 acres are governed by the county board of supervisors, and are not counted as separate governments. Please refer to "Subordinate Agencies Areas" listed below.

### **County Water Augmentation Authorities**

County water augmentation authorities are authorized by public petition, followed by a hearing. They are created to supplement the water supply of active management areas, through indirect groundwater storage and recovery projects. Governing board of directors for county water augmentation authorities are appointed by the Governor from a list of nominees submitted by participating local governments within the service area. The authority may impose fees for services and may issue revenue bonds.

### **County Water Authorities**

Water authorities may be formed in any county with a population of more than 90,000 and less than 120,000 for the purpose of acquiring, constructing, and operating projects to transport, deliver, and treat water. The board of directors consists of persons appointed by the town and city members. The authorities may collect dues and invest revenues in securities and deposits.

### **Drainage Districts**

Drainage districts are created to provide drainage for agricultural lands. They are established by petition of landowners to the county board of supervisors. A hearing follows the petition and a referendum is scheduled. Each district is governed by an elected board. The district may levy ad valorem taxes, impose special assessments, and issue bonds with voter approval. For irrigation and drainage districts, see "Irrigation Districts," below.

### **Electrical Districts**

Electrical districts are created for the purpose of obtaining power for irrigation water pumping, and are established by the county board of supervisors upon petition of landowners. The petition process is followed by a hearing and referendum. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and charge rates. The districts may also issue bonds upon voter approval.

### **Fire Districts**

These districts provide fire protection to unincorporated areas, and are formed by petition to

the board of supervisors. The petition process is followed by a public hearing. Fire districts are governed by an elected chief. Districts representing over 25,000 people will elect a district board of 5 people instead of electing a fire chief. Fire districts may levy ad valorem taxes and issue bonds upon voter approval.

#### **Flood Protection Districts—1921 Law**

Flood protection districts are created to provide for flood control, by petition of landowners to the county board of supervisors. After the petition is made, creation of the district occurs after public hearing. An elected board of directors governs each district. While these districts may levy ad valorem taxes, voter approval is required for all assessments levied, and for the issuance of bonds. County flood control districts established under the 1978 law are not counted as separate governments for census purposes. They are governed by the county board of supervisors, and are listed under “Subordinate Agencies and Areas” below.

#### **Groundwater Replenishment Districts**

The primary purpose of groundwater replenishment districts is to develop, store, augment, conserve, and replenish or increase water supplies for the benefit of the district region (consistent with achieving safe-yield). These districts are established by petition to the county board of supervisors, followed by a public hearing and resolution. An elected board of nine directors governs each district. Revenue collected by the district can include fees and charges, ad valorem taxes (with voter approval), and through the issuance of general obligation and revenue bonds. Arizona code prescribes that groundwater replenishment districts are not to be construed as affecting vested water rights

#### **Health Service Districts**

Health service districts are established to purchase, lease, lease-purchase, construct, equip, operate, or maintain ambulance services and/or medical clinics. These districts are usually created to serve areas that are medically-under serviced, with a territory larger than six hundred forty acres, representing more than three hundred qualified electors. These districts are established by petition to the county board of supervisors, followed by public hearing and referendum. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may fix rentals and charges, levy ad valorem taxes, and may issue bonds upon voter approval.

#### **Hospital Districts**

These districts may provide for health services and hospital facilities within a given area. Hospital districts are created by petition to the county’s board

of supervisors, after public hearing, after approval by the Arizona Department of Health Services. An elected board of directors (usually 5 people) governs the hospital district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes, collect rent, and issue bonds after voter approval.

#### **Irrigation Districts**

Irrigation districts are created to provide irrigation, domestic water supply, and electric power after petition of landowners to the county board of supervisors. Petition process is followed by hearing and referendum. Governing board of directors are elected. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and special assessments, fix tolls and charges, and issue bonds upon voter approval. “Irrigation and drainage districts” handling both irrigation and drainage functions may be established under the same law .

#### **Irrigation Water Delivery Districts**

These districts are established by the county board of supervisors to provide for the irrigation of water. Districts are created after petition of landowners is submitted to the county board of supervisors, followed by a public hearing. An elected board of trustees governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes, fix rates and fees, and issue bonds.

#### **Joint Powers Airport Authority**

This authority was established by an act of the state legislature to use previous military airbases for public purposes. A board of directors (appointed by the governing bodies of the cities, towns, and counties that are members of the authority) governs this entity. The authority may impose fees and charges, collect an ad valorem tax provided by member governments, and may issue revenue and refunding bonds.

#### **Public Transportation Authorities**

Metropolitan public transit authorities may be established in counties over 1,200,000 population (Maricopa) to provide transit service after voter approval of a transportation excise tax levy. An authority’s board of directors consists of one member appointed by each member city and one member appointed by the county. The authority may issue revenue bonds, fix fees and charges, accept grants and loans, and determine the amount of annual tax levies. The Metropolitan Public Transit Authority in the Phoenix area was formed under this law to coordinate transit service, but does not operate the transit service itself.

Metropolitan public transit authorities may be established in counties consisting of between 400,000 and 1,200,000 population (Pima) as well. Authority

board members are selected by member governments of the regional council of governments. Authority may fix fares and other charges, receive contributions from Federal and local governments, receive the proceeds of the county transportation excise tax, and issue limited obligation and revenue bonds.

Arizona law also provides for the formation of intergovernmental public transportation authorities in counties under 400,000 in population. Two or more cities and towns may petition the county board of supervisors for the creation of these authorities. If the petitioning governments are not contiguous, unincorporated areas existing between their boundaries must also be included within the proposed service area. At least one public hearing will be scheduled to establish whether public interest supports the authority. Any university falling under the jurisdiction of the Arizona Board of Regents may become party to the intergovernmental agreement and authority, provided that university is located within the jurisdiction of a municipal government party to the intergovernmental agreement and is a member of the authority. If the authority includes members from different counties, an intergovernmental agreement must be made between the county boards of supervisors which contain municipal and university participant. Between 5 and 9 board members will govern the authority. Board members are appointed by participating municipal governments and their county board of supervisors. Growth of a county's population over the stipulated 400,000 total population does not automatically cause for the dissolution of an existing authority.

#### **Pest Abatement Districts—1983 Law**

Pest abatement districts are created to control public health pests such as arthropods, rats, and mice. Public health pests as defined by this law are determined to be public nuisance to persons or property, and do not include arthropods which primarily attack agricultural crops. Pest abatement districts may be established by petition to the county board of supervisors, after public hearing and voter approval. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes.

#### **Pest Control Districts—1957 Law**

Unlike pest abatement districts, these governmental units focus on controlling pests which attack agricultural crops. These districts are created by the county board of supervisors upon petition of crop owners or landowners, after hearing and referendum. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy special assessments.

#### **Power Districts**

Power districts are created by the county board of supervisors, by petition of landowners. Petition

process is followed by public hearing and referendum. They are intended to generate and distribute electric power to a given geographic area. An elected board of directors governs each district. The districts may levy ad valorem taxes and issue bonds upon voter approval.

#### **Sanitary Districts Encompassing an Area of 160 Acres or More**

The primary function of sanitary districts is to provide sewerage facilities for regions falling within their jurisdictional boundaries. After a petition has been made by land owners to the county board of supervisors, sanitary districts can be created after a public hearing is held. Each district is governed by an elected board of directors. The districts may collect fees and rent, levy ad valorem taxes, and may issue bonds after voter approval.

Districts having fewer than 160 acres are governed by the county board of supervisors, and are not counted as separate governments. Please refer to the "Subordinate Agencies and Areas" listed below.

#### **Special Health Care Districts**

These districts are established to provide medical care and ambulance services for their areas. A board of five directors governs each authority. Special health care districts may collect rent, receive ad valorem taxes collected by the county, and issue bonds with voter approval.

#### **Special Road Districts**

These districts, which build and maintain highways and bridges, are established by the county board of supervisors after petition by taxpayers is submitted and a public referendum is held. An elected board of trustees governs each district. Special road districts may levy ad valorem taxes and issue bonds upon voter approval.

#### **The Tourism and Sports Authority**

Tourism and sports authorities oversee the design and construction of multi-purpose sports facilities, with the intent to eventually own and operate those facilities exclusively as a public agency. Such an agency is authorized for counties with populations greater than 2 million. Governing body consists of a 9-member board. Funding for the authority originates from fees for use of its facilities, hotel (bed) tax, and car rental tax collected on its behalf by the county board of supervisors. Currently, only one tourism and sports authority has been established under this law (Maricopa County). Agencies created under this law should not be confused with other county sports authorities, which are counted as dependent agencies for census purposes.

### **Water Conservation Districts (multi-county)**

Authorized by 1971 legislation, these districts are established by Arizona's Director of Water Resources, after a petition has been made by three or more counties or by voters of the region. Creation of these district occurs after a public hearing has been held. Upon creation, a contract is formed with the Secretary of the Interior for water from and payment of costs of the Central Arizona Project. An elected board of directors governs each district. The number of board members is determined by county population. The district board may fix and collect charges, levy ad valorem taxes, and accept grants. The Central Arizona Water Conservation District was established under this law.

### **SUBORDINATE AGENCIES AND AREAS**

The following list of governmental designations in Arizona do possess some governmental features, but are classified in census statistics as subordinate agencies of the state or local governments. They are not counted as separate governments for census purposes.

Among the subordinate agencies and areas listed, some represent "special taxing areas" within the territory of an established government. This method of financing provides for additional services within a portion of local government jurisdiction through property taxation. While this practice is used by some municipal and township governments in a few states, it is more widely observed in conjunction with county forms of government. In the listing below of authorized county-related agencies, a bullet (\*) appears for each entity of this kind—i.e., any that may individually serve a portion rather than all of a county and for which a tax may be levied against the assessed value of property in the area served.

**Arizona Power Authority (state).** This authority was created by a special act for the generation and transmission of electric power. A commission appointed by the Governor governs the authority. The authority may fix rates, fees, and tolls, and may issue revenue bonds.

**Housing authorities (municipal and county).** Municipalities and counties may establish housing authorities by resolution of the governing body. A board of housing commissioners governs each authority; the members are appointed by the mayor of a city or town or by the county board of supervisors. Rentals for housing projects are fixed by the government creating the authority, and bonds for housing authority purposes are issued by the sponsoring government. The sponsoring governments may also accept Federal grants.

**Industrial development authorities (county or municipal).** Authorities of this type are established to

finance and lease airport, commercial, convention, electric, gas, health care, industrial, pollution control, port, residential, sewerage, solid waste disposal, and water supply facilities, on the approval of the county or municipal governing body. A board of directors, appointed by the county or municipal governing body, governs each authority. Industrial development authorities may make loans to mortgage lenders, charge rents, and issue revenue bonds.

### **Natural resource conservation districts (state).**

Arizona has five natural resource conservation districts: Agua Fria / New River, Big Sandy, Coconino, Pima and Verde. These districts may be established to carry on soil conservation programs by petition of landowners to the state land commissioner, followed by a public hearing and referendum. A board of five supervisors governs each district. Three supervisors are elected and two are appointed by the state land commissioner. District revenues are limited to voluntary donations, gifts, and contributions. These districts have no bond-issuing powers.

### **Slum clearance and redevelopment commissions**

**(municipal).** General legislation authorizes cities and towns to establish these agencies. The commissioners are appointed by the mayor with the approval of the governing body. All administrative and fiscal powers are vested in the municipality; the commissioners perform only the specific duties assigned to them.

Other examples include:

#### **State**

Arizona Coliseum and Exposition Center Board  
Arizona Health Facilities Authority  
Arizona International Development Authority  
Arizona Industrial Commission  
Arizona Space Commission  
Arizona Technology Development Authority  
Arizona Water Protection Fund  
Arizona Wine Commission  
Commission on the Arizona Environment  
Cotton pest control districts  
Radiation Regulatory Agency  
Registration districts (vital statistics)  
Water Infrastructure Finance Authority  
Wastewater Management Authority of Arizona  
Water districts

#### **County**

Air pollution control districts  
Airport authorities (county)  
Antinoxious weed districts  
Community park maintenance districts  
(with an area encompassing fewer than 160 acres)  
Domestic water improvement districts

Flood control districts (county)  
Highway commissions (county)  
Housing departments and authorities (county)  
Jail districts (county)  
Library districts (county)  
Sports authorities  
Television improvement districts  
\*Improvement districts (county)  
Maricopa County Stadium District  
“No fence” districts  
Pollution control corporations  
Rural road improvement districts  
Sanitary districts encompassing an area of fewer than  
160 acres  
Special flood control districts

### **Municipal**

Airport authorities (municipal)  
Community facilities districts  
Housing departments and authorities  
Improvement districts (municipal)  
Lake Havasu Sanitary District (governed by city  
council)  
Municipal property corporations  
Phoenix Civic Improvement Corporation  
Phoenix Civic Plaza Building Corporation  
Pollution control corporations (municipal)  
Tucson Community Center Authority

Water and Sewer Systems (municipal)

### **Other**

The grazing districts in Arizona are areas for Federal administration of grazing lands. They are not counted as separate governments.

### **Private Corporations**

The Arizona Student Loan Finance Corporation is classified as a private corporation. It is not counted as a government. Arizona laws also provide for various types of local areas for election purposes and administration of justice.

<sup>1</sup> Formerly referred to as flood control districts.

<sup>2</sup> Municipal property corporations and the Tucson Community Center Authority are organized under nonprofit corporation law, but upon payment of their debt, title to their property reverts to the creating government

<sup>3</sup> This corporation is organized under nonprofit corporation law, and its directors are appointed by the city council.